

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 IGA-01

OMB-01 TRSE-00 EB-07 COME-00 MC-02 EUR-12 /082 W

----- 118217

R 221140Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8833

SECDEF WASHDC

INFO USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TUNIS 2360/1

USCINCEUR ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, PFOR, TS

SUBJECT: TUNISIAN REQUEST FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE

REF: A) STATE 85870

B) TUNIS 1832

C) TUNIS 1317

D) TUNIS 1500

E) TUNIS 0046

F) TUNIS 2359

1. SUMMARY: EMBASSY HAS MADE CLEAR TO TUNISIAN OFFICIALS THAT ANY INCREASE IN FMS CREDIT WHICH WE MIGHT MAKE AVAILABLE TO GOT CAN COVER ONLY PORTION OF GOT MILITARY EQUIPMENT PURCHASES.

"SUBSTANTIAL" INCREASE WHICH WE ENVISAGED WAS IN TERMS OF REACH- IN POSSIBLE ANNUAL LEVEL OF \$15 MILLION CREDITS, WHICH WE BELIEVE GOT WOULD CONSIDER HELPFUL RESPONSE TO THEIR REQUEST.

HOWEVER, TUNISIANS WILL WEIGH HELPFULNESS OF OUR RESPONSE NOT ONLY IN TERMS OF DOLLAR VALUE, BUT ALSO IN TERMS OUR WILLINGNESS SELL THE KINDS OF EQUIPMENT THEY FEEL ARE NEEDED TO MEET PERCEIVED LIBYAN THREAT.

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TO THEM THIS MEANS HAWK MISSILE SYSTEM FOR DEFENSE OF

TUNISIAN AIR SPACE NOT RPT NOT SHAPARRAL/VULCAN FOR THIS PURPOSE, WHICH THEY DO NOT CONSIDER EQUIVALENT. GOT, REALIZING REDEYE IS UNAVAILABLE, DOES ACCEPT CHAPARRAL AS REDEYE EQUIVALENT FOR DEFENSE OF DEPLOYED ARMY UNITS. EMBASSY BELIEVES IT WILL BE DIFFICULT DIVERT TUNISIAN INTEREST AWAY FROM HAWK. LIKEWISE WE HAVE PROBLEM WITH NOTION OF PERSUADING TUNISIANS TO USE AUGMENTED FMS CREDIT LEVELS TO PURCHASE UNCON- TROVERSIAL EQUIPMENT, BECAUSE GOT DOES NOT NOW HAVE REQUIREMENTS FOR SUCH EQUIPMENT SUFFICIENT TO UTILIZE MORE THAN SMALL FRACTION OF ANTICIPATED CREDITS. EMBASSY THEREFORE SEES NEED TO ANTICIPATE SEEKING PRESIDENTIAL DETERMINATION FOR WHICH WE BELIEVE EXCELLENT CASE CAN BE MADE. END SUMMARY.

2. IN LIGHT OF STATE 85870 EMBASSY WISHES TO OFFER FURTHER CLARIFICATION REGARDING WHAT GOT EXPECTS OF US IN WAY OF FURTHER CREDIT ASSISTANCE. IN INDICATING THAT GOT HOPES FOR "SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE" IN FMS CREDIT (REF B), WE DID NOT RPT NOT MEAN TO SUGGEST THAT TUNISIAN'S EXPECT US TO PROVIDE THEM WITH ALL OR EVEN MOST OF THE CREDIT WHICH WILL BE REQUIRED TO TAKE CARE OF THEIR CURRENT MILITARY EQUIPMENT PACKAGE. LIMITS OF OUR CAPABILITY HAVE BEEN MADE CLEAR TO TUNISIAN OFFICIALS REPEATEDLY AND, IN PARTICULAR, DURING AMBASSADOR'S CONVERSATION WITH SECSTATE FOR DEFENSE BENNOUR LAST MONTH (REF C) AND MORE RECENTLY TO PRIME MINISTER ON APRIL 21 (REF F). IN USING TERM "SUBSTANTIAL," WE HAD IN MIND ANNUAL FIGURE OF AROUND \$15M, WHICH WOULD INDEED REPRESENT, IN OUR VIEW, "SUBSTANTIAL" INCREASE FROM CURRENT LEVEL. IF WE ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE CREDIT OF \$15M EACH YEAR DURING PERIOD OF FIVE YEARS, APPROXIMATELY ONE-HALF OF GOT'S EQUIPMENT NEEDS, AS MODIFIED (REF D), WILL HAVE BEEN COVERED BY FMS CREDIT.

3. IN ADVOCATING, IN CHIEF OF MISSION'S SUMMARY STATE- MENT (REF B), CONTINUATION OF OUR SECURITY ASSISTANCE WE DID NOT MEAN TO SUGGEST THAT WE SHOULD "ADJUST LEVEL OF SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO ACCORD IN SUBSTANTIAL (RPT SUBSTANTIAL) DEGREE WITH GOT'S PERCEPTIONS OF CONFIDENTIAL

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REQUIREMENTS" (FIRST PARA, REF A). TERM WE USED WAS "TO A DEGREE" (PAR 7, REF B). INTENDED POINT WAS NOT RPT NOT THAT WE SHOULD FINANCE ALL GOT PURCHASES BUT ONLY THAT IF USG UNABLE TO INCREASE CREDIT LEVEL SOMEWHAT AT TIME WHEN GOT REQUIREMENTS HAVE MOVED UPWARD, CREDIBILITY OF OUR SHARING GOT CONCERN IS WEAKENED.

4. REF A SUGGESTED DEFLECTING GOT INTEREST IN HIGHLY SOPHISTICATED AND COSTLY ITEMS, E.G. HAWK TO LESS EXPENSIVE AND LESS TECHNICALLY DIFFICULT SYSTEMS AVAILABLE, E.G. CHAPARRAL/VULCAN. ORIGINAL TUNISIAN REQUEST (REF E) SPECIFIED "HAWK OR EQUIVALENT." FOR TECHNICAL REASONS, THE TUNISIANS DO NOT CONSIDER THE CHAPARRAL AS EQUIVALENT TO THE HAWK. CHAPARRAL/VULCAN IS A TACTICAL AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM DESIGNED FOR DEFENSE OF ARMY FIELD ELEMENTS AGAINST LOW ALTITUDE AIRCRAFT. HAWK IS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE AIR DEFENSE OF VITAL INSTALLATIONS SUCH AS URBAN/INDUSTRIAL CENTERS, PORTS, AIRFIELDS, ETC. CHAPARRAL IS CONSIDERABLY MORE LIMITED IN ALTITUDE AND IN TARGET ACQUISITION RANGE AS WELL AS OPERATION UNDER CONDITIONS OF REDUCED VISIBILITY. CHAPARRAL IS ESSENTIALLY A TAIL CHASE WEAPON, I.E., IT IS MOST EFFECTIVE AFTER ATTACKING AIRCRAFT HAS PASSED.

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